

China Plans to 'Publish More and Better'

But New Policy Doesn't Suggest a Wider Spectrum of Opinion

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HONG KONG — China, which has published only a handful of magazines and newspapers since the Cultural Revolution, has indicated that old periodicals may be revived soon — or new ones started.

No new publications have yet been seen by foreigners, but Peking recently mentioned that a new novel had been written and the major official magazine carried an article titled: "Publish More and Better Popular Reading Material."

A particular audience for new publications, the article in the magazine Red Flag makes clear, is China's youth. Teen-agers were added to the usual trio — workers, peasants, soldiers — as a group that has made "varied and higher demands for popular reading materials."

At present, the Chinese reader has his choice of the authoritative party newspaper People's Daily, the army newspaper and one other newspaper in Peking. A scattering of provincial newspapers have reappeared after halting publication during the Cultural Revolution, but many of them simply reprint articles from Peking's publications.

Red Flag, a monthly, is another major Communist Party outlet, and the government also publishes a monthly pictorial magazine, a monthly called Chinese Literature which carries short stories and poems extolling revolutionary worker and soldier heroes and the Peking Review weekly which generally reprints articles from the official New China news agency.

"Some comrades hold that publishing more or less popular reading material does

not matter much' and hence may be 'assigned a lower priority and even delayed,'" Red Flag says. "Such thinking is obviously incorrect."

A Great Deal Needed

Not only do China's people need a great deal of political literature, Red Flag says, but also articles "on literature and art, science and technology, history, geography, international affairs and so forth."

However, analysts here believe that whatever new publications appear they are extremely unlikely to differ in tone from the existing official publications. The Red Flag call for more reading matter does not suggest that such new articles should represent a wider spectrum of opinion than exists at present.

Instead, Red Flag argues that new publications are necessary to fill a vacuum that might otherwise be filled by ideological enemies of Chairman Mao Tse-tung. Proletariat's Role

"Facts of the class struggle have fully shown that if the proletariat does not occupy the ideological-cultural position, the bourgeoisie will surely do so," Red Flag says. "Bad books will surely harm the masses and the young people," it continues, if "we do not publish a great number of revolutionary books."

Some analysts here speculate that magazines like China Youth and China Science, which disappeared during the Cultural Revolution, may start up again in coming months. They argue that the reintroduction of those institutions would be in line with the reestablishment of pre-Cultural Revolution institutions in other fields.

The Red Flag call for more publications is also seen here as fallout from

the purge of Chen Po-ta, Mao's secretary who formerly edited Red Flag and had a major voice in Peking's decisions touching literature and art. Chen was a principle political theoretician, and early foe of disgraced former President Liu Shao-chi and enthusiastic supporter of the Cultural revolution's drive for revolutionary purity of thought and culture.

One of the legacies of the Cultural Revolution has been a reluctance of some Chinese officials to take initiative for fear that they, like officials early in the upheaval, will find themselves out of step with the top leadership and thereby vulnerable.

As in earlier discussions of party reorganization, industrial development and agricultural planning, Red Flag's article on publishing attacks officials who are afraid to make decisions.

"We must never stand still just because we are afraid of making mistakes," Red Flag says. "It cannot be denied that at the present moment some difficulties are encountered in the course of writing, compiling and publishing various kinds of popular reading materials," Red Flag says.

Some officials still belittle workers, peasants and soldiers in favor of following an "expert line", the article continues. But it makes clear that specialists also have a role and that these intellectuals can "give full play to their special talents."

But the intellectuals are to be carefully watched and the content of their writings to be analyzed, Red Flag says.

"What should we do if poisonous weeds appear?" Red Flag asks. "We need only mobilize the masses to criticize them and change them into fertilizer."

The article also indicates that a large expansion of China's selection of reading matter will not take place at one stroke. "After working for several years or longer," Red Flag says, China will "bring an unprecedentedly prosperous new situation to our publishing business."